

Ladies no more excuses! Time to take care of ourselves

Written by Brandi Phillips, Health & Wellness Reporter
Thursday, 02 July 2009 14:45

I find it very disturbing how many African American women decide not to take care of themselves in an appropriate and healthy manner. It seems that the women in our community find it a chore to workout, even if it is just for 20 minutes three times a week, which literally adds up to an hour per week.

In my personal opinion, I see our women, on a daily and weekly basis, going to the club, getting their hair and nails done, shopping, and chasing men. This type of beautifying is good, but not necessarily good enough. We as a community of strong women need to take care of ourselves with weekly cardio and strength training exercises.

Try this- take a walk around one of Minnesota's beautiful 10,000 lakes and see the population of white women who are walking, running, biking, rollerblading, walking their dog, playing volleyball and even swimming. A popular argument is these women want to be skinny and cannot stand the thought of being "thick".

I am the person to tell you this is not true. There are plenty of white women who date African-American, Hispanic and other men who find "thick" women attractive. These women want the big butt, small waists and ample bosom, just like the rest of us, but they continue to work out everyday or at least every other day to get the bodies they want.

I also hear the dispute "I do not have enough time to workout". I have to ask, what kind of excuse is that? If we as women do not take time to make ourselves happy and healthy, who is going to do it for us? If we do not take care of ourselves, we absolutely will not be able to take care of our families.

Being healthy should not be a chore, but rather a natural part of your lives. Exercising should be as much a part of our lives as breathing, eating, showering and brushing our teeth. Ladies we need to be physically healthy so that our children can grow up to be healthy adults.

We must teach our girls that there is a difference between being "thick and healthy" and being "fat and sloppy". Yes I said it "fat and sloppy". I think many of our girls who think they are "thick", are actually very out of shape and sloppy.

I firmly believe, what our children do in the early stages of their lives, they will continue to do into their adult years. If they do not continue to workout, they will at least have the desire.

This is my thought because as a youth my father would run 7 miles per day around Lake Calhoun, and let my brothers and I ride our bikes while he ran. To this day I continue to workout either dancing, yoga, Qi Gong (a form of Tai Chi), running, power walking and more. Although my brothers do not work out as consistently as I do, they continue to be avid bike riders.

I was raised in a family that took being physically healthy very seriously. I will admit that I do sometimes fall off the exercise horse, but when I do, I get back on and start over. My goal is not to be skinny, but healthy and wishfully on the "thicker" side.

Working out can be simple and enjoyable. Instead of watching TV with or without a plate of

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food, take your family for a walk, a bike ride, swimming, dance with them at home, or do an exercise DVD in the comfort of your own home.

I would like to encourage all you beautiful women to try to workout more and to create families that value being physically healthy. I promise you this is something you will not regret.

By exercising, you will feel better, look better and thus be happier. When you are happier, your families will be happier. As the saying goes, "If mama isn't happy (healthy), nobody is happy (healthy)"!

So to the new you ladies, I say "Salud", which means "to your health" in Spanish.

Brandi Patterson Phillips is a freelance health and wellness reporter with an extensive background in mental and physical health training and education. She is also a Life Skills Coach, fitness trainer and professional dancer. She is currently studying for her M.B.A. at St. Mary's University in Minneapolis. Brandi currently teaches @ Creative Arts High School in St. Paul, MN, Summit Early Learning Center in Minneapolis, and is president of the Minnesota Fit Club for Women. Please direct all health and wellness questions to bodybybrandiva@gmail.com. Answers will be chosen to appear in subsequent Insight News editions.